

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower comprising:
 - a frame adapted to be coupled to a vehicle and rollingly supported on the ground;
 - a motor rigidly coupled to the frame;
 - a mowing deck coupled to the frame for pivotal movement relative to the frame on first and second intersecting pivot axes; and
 - a drive train for drivingly coupling the motor to the deck so that the motor powers the deck, said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts for rotation therewith, said U-joint being centered proximate the intersection of the first and second pivot axes.
2. (original) A mower according to claim 1,
 - said deck being pivotable relative to the frame on the first pivot axis between a retracted position and an extended position,
 - said deck being pivotable relative to the frame on the second pivot axis between an engaged position and a disengaged position,
 - said first and second pivot axes being at least substantially perpendicular to one another.
3. (original) A mower according to claim 2,
 - said deck pivoting through a first pivot angle of more than about 20° when pivoted between the extended and retracted positions,

said deck pivoting through a second pivot angle of more than about 30° when pivoted between the engaged and disengaged position.

4. (original) A mower according to claim 2,
said first pivot axis being generally upright.

5. (original) A mower according to claim 4,
said first drive shaft being configured for rotation on the first pivot axis.

6. (currently amended) A mower according to claim 1; and
a support arm comprising a frame-side section coupled to the frame and a deck-side section coupled to the deck,
said support arm including a hinge joint for permitting pivoting of the deck-side section relative to the ~~hinge-side~~ frame-side section.

7. (original) A mower according to claim 6,
said hinge joint permitting pivoting of the deck relative to the frame on the second pivot axis.

8. (original) A mower according to claim 7,
said frame-side section being rotatably coupled to the frame,
said frame-side section being rotatable relative to the frame on the first pivot axes.

9. (original) A mower according to claim 8,
said first and second pivot axes being substantially perpendicular to one another.

10. (original) A mower according to claim 9,

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said first pivot axis being generally upright.

11. (original) A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower configured to be pulled behind a vehicle and powered independently of the vehicle, said mower comprising:

- a frame presenting a fore end and an aft end;
- a hitch coupled to the fore end and configured to releasably couple the frame to the vehicle in a manner that permits pivoting of the frame relative to the vehicle;
- a pair of laterally spaced wheels coupled to the aft end and adapted to rollingly support the frame on the ground;
- a mowing deck operable to cut vegetation when positioned proximate the ground;
- a support arm comprising a frame-side section rotatably coupled to the frame and a deck-side section rigidly coupled to the deck, said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled; and
- a motor rigidly coupled to the frame and drivingly connected to the deck, so as to power the deck independently of the vehicle.

12. (original) A mower according to claim 11; and
a drive train for transferring power from the motor to the deck,
said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts.

13. (original) A mower according to claim 12,
said support arm permitting pivoting of the deck relative to the frame on first and second distinct and intersecting pivot axes,
said U-joint being centered proximate the intersection of the first and second pivot axes.

14. (original) A mower according to claim 11,
said frame-side section being rotatable relative to the frame on a first pivot axis,

said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled on a second pivot axes,
said first and second pivot axes being substantially perpendicular to one another.

15. (original) A mower according to claim 14,
said first and second pivot axes intersecting one another.

16. (original) A mower according to claim 15,
said first pivot axis being generally upright.

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17-23. (canceled)

24. (original) A pull-behind mower for cutting ground vegetation, said mower configured to be pulled behind a vehicle, said mower comprising:

- a frame presenting a fore end and an aft end;
- a hitch coupled to the fore end and configured to releasably couple the frame to the vehicle in a manner that permits pivoting of the frame relative to the vehicle;
- a pair of laterally spaced wheels coupled to the aft end and adapted to rollingly support the frame on the ground;
- a mowing deck operable to cut vegetation when positioned proximate the ground;
- a support arm comprising a frame-side section rotatably coupled to the frame and a deck-side section rigidly coupled to the deck, said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled;
- a motor for powering the deck; and
- a drive train for transferring power from the motor to the deck, said drive train including a first rotatable drive shaft, a second rotatable drive shaft, and a U-joint coupled between the first and second drive shafts.

25. (original) A mower according to claim 24, said support arm permitting pivoting of the deck relative to the frame on first and second distinct and intersecting pivot axes, said U-joint being centered proximate the intersection of the first and second pivot axes.

26. (original) A mower according to claim 24, said frame-side section being rotatable relative to the frame on a first pivot axis, said frame-side and deck-side sections being hingedly intercoupled on a second pivot axes, said first and second pivot axes being substantially perpendicular to one another.

27. (original) A mower according to claim 26,

said first and second pivot axes intersecting one another.

28. (original) A mower according to claim 26,
said first pivot axis being generally upright.

29. (original) A mower according to claim 28; and
a mechanism operable to inhibit pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis.

30. (original) A mower according to claim 29,
said mechanism being operable to selectively inhibit downward pivoting of the deck on the
second pivot axis.

31. (original) A mower according to claim 30,
said mechanism comprising a cable coupled to the frame and the deck.

32. (original) A mower according to claim 24,
said motor being rigidly coupled to the frame so as to power the deck independently of the
vehicle.

33. (original) A mower according to claim 32,
said motor being a gas-powered motor.

34. (original) A mower according to claim 1,
said motor being a gas-powered motor.

35. (original) A mower according to claim 4,
a mechanism operable to inhibit pivoting of the deck on the second pivot axis.

36. (original) A mower according to claim 35,
said mechanism being operable to selectively inhibit downward pivoting of the deck on the
second pivot axis.

37. (original) A mower according to claim 36,
said mechanism comprising a cable coupled to the frame and the deck.

38. (new) A mower according to claim 1,
said U-joint permitting variation in the angle of intersection between the axes of rotation of
the first and second rotatable drive shafts.

39. (new) A mower according to claim 1,
said U-joint being a Hooke's joint.

40. (new) A mower according to claim 24,
said U-joint permitting variation in the angle of intersection between the axes of rotation of
the first and second rotatable drive shafts.

41. (new) A mower according to claim 24,
said U-joint being a Hooke's joint.